



# The 2019 Tax Statement



A newsletter of the Galveston County Tax Office – Where the race for quality has no finish line!



from the desk of

**Cheryl E. Johnson**

There is so much to tell and so little space! About 391 property tax related bills were filed and 35% passed (*with an occasional veto*). The Legislature passed reforming property tax and school finance laws which will significantly impact both appraisal processes and local government spending. I do fear that “appraisal creep” will continue to erode the benefits and am seeking support for an interim study on appraisal reform.

In short – HB 3 compressed school district maintenance and operations (M&O) tax rates with 2019 rates down between 7¢ to 10.2¢. That calculates to \$70 – \$102/\$100,000 in savings this year. Expect future savings as school district rates will continue to be compressed as property values rise.

Major changes are coming with regard to government spending as a result of SB 2. I am excited that the Comptroller will form a Board tasked with recommending Statewide appraisal consistency, CADs can no longer charge for documents and *may* provide a list of persons to provide *free* help to protesting homeowners. The Appraisal Review Board and arbitrators will receive additional training, the ARB will no longer be

able to increase your value and so much more! Please visit the GCTO website at [www.galcotax.com](http://www.galcotax.com) (under *Press Releases & Important Information*) and on Facebook at Cheryl Johnson/Tax Office page for more information.

Online Sheriff Sales are coming, State and Federal laws impacting military deferral of taxes have been aligned, and *certain* disaster victims will no longer face a huge value increase (*thus tax increase*) after a rebuild!

There were some minor changes that impact voter registration (*many on elections*). Stay tuned for more on that!

Remember – we register and title boats at all offices for all Texas counties (*and we accept credit cards*). Pick up an extra ID before heading to Clear Lake, Galveston Bay or the Gulf of Mexico!

We have long used technology to streamline operations. In recent years, we began processing tax payments and motor vehicle registrations electronically, added “remote capture” at full time branches (*reducing time it takes to close out which allows for more time on the counter serving you*) and this year we added online Special Inventory Tax services which facilitates the vehicle, watercraft and heavy equipment industries!

Did I say we became one of the **TOP 7 TEXAS TAX OFFICES** achieving the Silver Performance Award from TxDMV! *It was a good year!*

*Cheryl*

**Contact GCTO** Full time locations open 8 am to 5 pm Monday - Friday

General Information..... (409) 766-2284 or Toll Free (877) 766-2284  
 Fax..... (409) 766-2479  
 Email..... [galcotax@co.galveston.tx.us](mailto:galcotax@co.galveston.tx.us)  
 Website..... [www.galcotax.com](http://www.galcotax.com)  
 Cheryl E. Johnson, PCC, Tax Assessor/Collector..... (409) 766-2260  
 Sheryl R. Swift, PCC, Chief Deputy Business Services ..... (409) 766-2474  
 Erma Evans, PCC, Chief Deputy Property Tax & Administration.. (409) 766-2476  
 Property Tax Department..... (409) 766-2481  
 Motor Vehicle Registration Information (*Galveston Branch*) ..... (409) 766-2485  
 Voter Registration Department ..... (409) 766-2280 or Toll Free (888) 976-2280

## GCTO 10 COMMANDMENTS (+1) OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

1. The customer is never an interruption to our work – the customer IS our work
2. Brighten every customer's day, greet everyone with a smile
3. Whenever possible, acknowledge customers by name
4. Project professionalism, courtesy and dignity to everyone
5. State things in a positive way
6. NEVER argue with a customer
7. Always go the extra mile to provide assistance
8. Never say, “I don't know what to do” without saying, “but I would be more than happy to find out.”
9. Never blame someone else
10. Never forget that the customer pays our salary
11. Be remarkable!

## HAVE A MORTGAGE?

For the third year, we mailed tax statements to ALL property owners (*except for e-statement requestors*), even if requested by a mortgage company. This was originally done to prevent delinquencies because the wrong company requested and paid the taxes. After two attempts, we successfully passed a bill to eliminate this situation (beginning January 1, 2020), as we will be able to obtain a waiver of penalty and interest as a clerical error.

If you escrow your taxes, take the time to call the mortgage company and confirm it requested the bill. Refinance recently? Make sure the proper company received the bill! It takes less time to validate that than the time it takes for us to issue you a refund!



## STAKE YOUR CLAIM!

On our homepage, click on the green Unclaimed Tax Refunds button, read the info then search for your name (*pdf file listing is sorted first by city then owner of the refund*). We will escheat most to the Comptroller and County over the summer of 2020 so take advantage now! It is MUCH easier to “stake a claim” with us than the State!

## Ways to Pay

1. In person weekdays 8 am to 5 pm
2. Mail payment in enclosed envelope (*include coupon*) and make sure **postmark is timely for payment option!**
3. Go online to [www.galcotax.com](http://www.galcotax.com), click on the large red button, locate account and pay via credit or debit card or e-check. Bank fees apply!
4. Pay with credit or debit card via telephone. Call toll free (*English*) 1-866-865-1433 or (*Spanish*) 1-866-865-1435. Bank fees apply!
5. Drop in a marked GCTO payment box located at all but the Crystal Beach office. Items are picked up at 8:30 am and stamped received for the previous business day!

## Appraisal Districts

County appraisal districts (CAD) must locate, list and appraise properties. They also handle exemptions, name, address and ownership changes. We will provide forms and assist whenever possible or you may contact the appropriate CAD directly as shown below:

Galveston CAD 9850 EF Lowry Expressway (FM 1764),  
Texas City ☼ [www.galvestoncad.org](http://www.galvestoncad.org)  
(409) 935-1980 or (866) 277-4725 toll free  
Email: [gcad@galvestoncad.org](mailto:gcad@galvestoncad.org)

Harris CAD 13013 Northwest Freeway (SH 290),  
Houston ☼ [www.hcad.org](http://www.hcad.org)  
(713) 957-7800 ☼ Email: [help@hcad.org](mailto:help@hcad.org)

## GCTO Locations

Galveston Courthouse, 722 Moody, Galveston (*Branch, Accounting, Property Tax, Support Services & Voter Registration*)  
North County: 174 Calder Drive, League City  
West County: 11730 Highway 6, Santa Fe  
East County: 2516 Texas Avenue, Texas City

### Satellite Offices: (Offices close Noon to 1 pm)

946 Noble Carl Rd, Crystal Beach (*monthly the 3rd Tuesday 8 am to 4:30 pm*)

910 S Friendswood Dr, Friendswood (*Thursday & Friday 8 am to 5 pm*)

## 2020 Property Tax Seminars

Learn to Protest Your Appraised Value! Carried over from 2019, class is presented in two different phases. The June 9th class will prepare you for the formal ARB protest.

All classes begin at 6 pm and (*with Q&A*) last about two hours. Can't attend? Beginning April 1st, download all class materials at [www.galcotax.com](http://www.galcotax.com) (*Press Releases and Important Information*). **Don't miss the May 15th deadline to schedule your CAD appointment!**

### Date Location

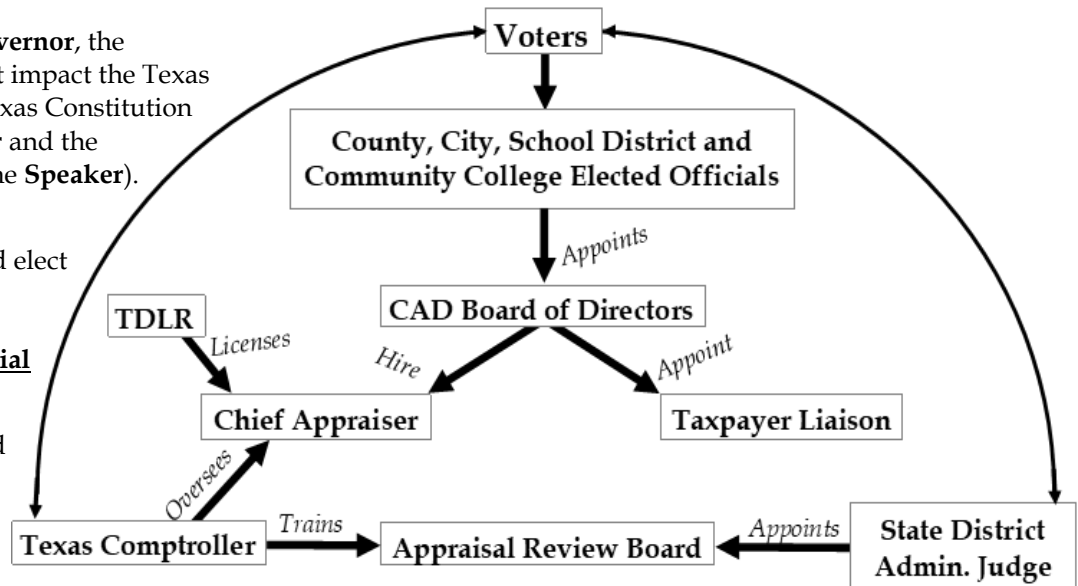
4/30 COM Learning Resource Center, 1200 Amburn, Texas City  
5/05 League City Council Chambers, 200 W. Walker, League City  
5/12 Commissioners Courtroom, 722 Moody, Galveston  
6/09 Community Room, Mid County Annex, 9850 EF Lowry Expressway, Texas City

## Who's Who in the Texas Tax System?

Under the leadership of the **Governor**, the Legislature creates the laws that impact the Texas tax system as allowed by the Texas Constitution (**Senate** led by the **Lt. Governor** and the **House of Representatives** by the **Speaker**).

Voters pass (or do not pass) Constitutional amendments and elect the Governor, the Lt. Governor, Senators and House members making **YOU** the **most influential** person in the process!

Concerns? Contact your elected officials at EVERY level (State, County, City, etc.).



To obtain assistance or update name or address information, please complete the form below, cut along dotted line and return in the payment envelope along with payment. Include account number. PLEASE do not write on payment coupon!

ACCOUNT NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_